

Irrational fears

by TheLockPickingVictorian

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Summary: Hiccup never really learnt that everyone has fears; and maybe even the great Astrid Hofferson is scared of what may lurk in the dark.

Irrational fears

The forge was always cold this time of year. Well, it was always cold, full stop, but it was a lot colder in the middle of December than it ever was in any other month. It was something Hiccup had become used to over the long time he'd been Gobbler's apprentice, But Astrid, who has never spent much time in the forge in the old days, had not.

"Hicc...up... it's... so...coo...ld." She shivered, curling in on herself, her bare arms wrapped around her small body, attempting to preserve as much heat from the fire he was using as possible. Sitting as she was, Hiccup realised she looked... small. It was odd to think of the great Astrid Hofferson as small. He was the small one, not her; not Astrid, the great, talented, smart, properly a viking, Astrid. But, really she was small, very small compared to the vikings and dragons he'd seen her take down. Yet to him, she still seemed very un-small, in the nicest way possible that is.

"I know." He frowned, dropping the heavy tool he was holding back on to the bench so he could rap one small, weedy arm around the shivering girl beside him. _'To keep her warm'_ his brain took delight in reminding him. "We have blankets that we use in the winter, but I think Gobbler's stashed them all away upstairs somewhere. I can get you one if you..."

"No, D...on't" Astrid cried, stopping him in the middle of his sure to be another humiliating (yet sweet) offer. "I'll g...et it!"

She unwrapped her arms slowly, and stood on unsure legs, shaking uncontrollably as she slid from where she was sat on the table he was

working at._ 'Poor Girl'_ Hiccup's brain pipped up again _'Why did you invite her around again? So she could freeze? No! Idiot!_'

"Great," He muttered as he quickly checked on his 'latest project' (as he had lamely named it in his mind) in her absence "Now I'm insulting _and_ talking to myself! I am slowly going very mad because of her." Any madness Hiccup experienced would be Astrid's fault, he has decided recently. He was a teenage boy, girls practically _suppost_ to drive him crazy, in good and bad ways, and as apparently the whole village knew of his 'little' crush (he blamed her for that too; if she hadn't kissed him when and where she did, no-one would know. Hiccup wasn't complaining though) he decided Astrid could deal with the blame for once.

He removed his 'latest project' from it's hiding place as he watched her disappear upstairs. The pink metal had solidified, and now appeared so silver that the pink was only visible in _just_ the right light. The bracelet was simple: a circle of metal cut in half with a springed hinge joining the two halves together. The design: a complicated weave of leaves scratched into the metal with nadder scales pressed in here and there, was not. The springed hinge hadn't been his idea - it had been Gobbler's, who had teased him relentlessly about the bracelet for days after. Yet despite the teasing Hiccup had spent the last five and a half hours buffing and polishing it untill it appeared to glow as if it gave out its own light; spent the last week recreating the complex pattern from thousands of drawings and 'pressing in' the chips of scale (which, in reality, consisted of painstakingly soldering each_ tiny_ fragment of scale to the metal without destroying the decoration around it) ; he'd spent the week before that building moulds and melting, cutting and moulding the metal, rounding sides and springs for safety precautions. And he had spent the week before that designing the bracelet and gathering the metal, once he has decided which to use, of course.

And finally, it was done.

He sat the bangle before him - the metal would cover the same amount of arm that his hand would if he gripped her arm, yet it was thinner than the leather of his vest - It really was moved of an oval shape thank a circle; it would fit perfectly to the shape of Astrid's arm so it wouldn't slip as she ,trained or flew. Yes her really had thought of everything.

Hiccup picked the bracelet up again, not happy with the fitting of one scale piece , but no sooner than he _did_ pick it up did he hear it.

A scream.

A distinctly female scream.

A distinctly Astrid scream.

Then...

"HICCUP!" It was loud, shrill and very un-Astrid-like.

"Astrid!" He shouted back, dropping the metal to the floor, running

up the stairs three at a time. His leg would thank him for it in the morning but that was far better than the alternate.

In hindsight, he really shouldn't have panicked. What did he think was upstairs - in Gobber's room no less - that could possibly have hurt her? And if something had been there (what had he thought had been up there? Seriously?!), she was Astrid, still just as threatening even without her axe (this he knew from first hand experience). And WHY would she call HIM to help HER?

He also, he added to the growing list later, should have brought a lamp.

The dark room helped none as he limped over to where she stood against the wall, breathing heavily, totally paralyzed in fear. Her big blue eyes were open wide in shock and horror. They where the same blue eyes that had haunted his nightmares for weeks - the baby face was fat, hair black, freckle-less and totally not in anyway related to him. While its eyes where pure, shining, blue.

Hiccup shuddered.

"Astrid?" He tried gently and her wide scared eyes metal his.

"Get rid of it!" She squeaked (yes squeaked. Astrid Hofferson Squeaked), closing said eyes and turning her head into the mental shoulder pad he so rearly saw her without. She was pointing a single finger in front of her, yet it seamed that there was nothing there. Still, Hiccup crept towards her slowly, incase her attacker was some kind of invisible dragon (or at least a Change-Wing) but the closer he got to her, the more of the creature he could see. It was the tensiest, tiniest spider he had ever seen.

"Um... you're not pointing at the spider, are you Astrid?" He asked, there had to be a mistake. Astrid wasn't afraid of anything, and this tiny spider...

"Please Hiccup." She whimpered "I'm begging you, get it away from me."

Her fear was so intense that he pulled the spider down by its web without a second thought. With the small thing somewhere outside the window on the others side of the room, her protective position softened as he came back.

"No spiders here" he told her softly, holding out his hands "see?"

She watched him walked towards her, pushing her hair away from her face.

"Go on then," she huffed at him "laugh at me."

"And why" Hiccup asked as he picked the blankets up from where she'd dropped them and lead her back downstairs by her hand "would I do that?"

"Cause it's not viking-like, is it?" The question was rhetorical and she knew he knew but she continued, knowing that if she stopped he would answer the question even if she didn't want an answer. "I was a

dragon killing, butt kicking viking and I'm scared of spiders. It's weak."

"Hey, it's not weak, it's just different." But Hiccup knew Astrid better than he knew himself, and he knew this was a lost cause. Different didn't sit well with vikings and he could tell the adrenaline was leaving her, and she was getting cold again, so he gave up persuading and wrapped the thick woolen blanket around her shoulders. He'd try again when there wasn't a possibility of her dying of cold.

Smiling shyly, she reached up and pushed his fringe away from his eyes. She liked his eyes, she'd once told him. He just hoped that was a good thing. But he watched her eyebrows slope together as she brushed gently at something beside his eye, as if trying to dislodge it. It was a small spot of light, orange in colour and smaller than a thumb print. It was kind of distorted too, like a refraction...

"Oh!" Hiccup yelled suddenly, jolting out of Astrid's hold and scooping up thankfully undamaged bangle off the floor before Astrid saw it. He checked it over quickly, double checking that dropping it hadn't marked it in anyway. But being stealthy was what Astrid did best and she snuck up on him quicker than Toothless could have.

"Whatcha doing, Dragon boy?" She cooed in his ear and he jumped a mile, thrusting what he held behind his back.

"Astrid!" He exclaimed before stuttering through his usual "Astrid! Hey Astrid! What are you...?" before giving up, as usual. But Astrid knew his ticks and held out a hand for whatever he was hiding from her. Hiccup decided that his new life goal was to break his annoying habit of yelling out the name of the person who found him doing something he shouldn't have been doing. It just gave it away. So with a sigh and a hope that it would stop her from hurting him, he handed his creation to her.

He watched as her eyes went wide with shock, obviously not expecting this and she stared at him, waiting for an explanation.

"It's your Birthday soon," he told her "And I've never been able to give you anything, cause of the whole, ya' know, outsider thing. So I wanted to make you something special, something as unique and beautiful as you are. Cause you are beautiful and unique and that's a good thing. And the whole spider thing just makes you even more amazing! But," He gestured to the lump of metal she held, in which he only saw the imperfections "that was the best I could do."

"It is beautiful, Hiccup." She told him, offering it back as her lips curled into a heartbreakingly beautiful smile "Wanna give it to me properly?"

He nodded, talking back the band as she pulled herself back onto the table in front of him until, excluding the blankets, they were stood in the exact same place as they were before anything happened.

Hiccup inhaled, stood at his full high and held her eyes with his own. 'All this fuss' one half of his brain moaned 'you'd think I was proposing or something!'

_ 'Not yet' _ piped up the others half _ 'but maybe same day.' _

"Astrid." He said, pushing his minds ramblings away "I know it's early, but I just spent the last month making this for you, so for gods sake, will you just take the stupid bracelet?" The giggle she let out at that made his head spin , he'd never get bored of making Astrid laugh. So he - for some reason beyond his control - he winked at her.

So she punched him on the arm.

"Ow!" He yelled "What was that for?"

"That" she beamed "was for 'the spider thing'!" And as he expected, she pulled him in and pecked him softly on the lips. She pulled back to smile at him quickly before she kissed him again, deeper and more meaningful this time, if possible. He had to pinch her ribcage rather tightly before she would let him go, and he had no doubt that his delicately crafted creation would have ended up back on the floor if she didn't.

"And that?" He asked into her cheek bone.

She beamed at him and, between soft pants, got out the words "Because I could."

She let him put the bracelet around her wrist.

The next time she took it off was to hand it to a lanky, blue eyed girl with her father's auburn hair.

* * *

><p>HA! First finished HTTYD fic! Done!
I making a bit of a habbit of this...

End
file.